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Mill on the Subjection of Women.
The little book on the "Woman Question" lately published by Mr. John Stuart Mill, has already passed through several editions in England. It has been translated into French and German, and is eagerly sought for and widely discussed in the various centres of

European thought and culture. In this country we observe with regret that it has not attracted the attention it deserves. It is beyond comparison the best book which has yet been written upon this much vexed question concerning which almost everybody dogmatizes, but which almost nobody studies. It is a small book—a model of precision and compactness; there is scarcely a superfluous

The ground taken by Mr. Mack, briefly stated by himself is:

To establish this position may well be called an undue task, since custom, tradition, and

other powers of inertia are arranged on the other side. Mr. Mill commences by minish- ing every citadel of his adversaries. He de- nials the major premise on which all their arguments and assumptions rest. He denies that the existing civil inequality between men and women has its foundation in any per- manent fact in nature; and he insists that the onus of proof lies with those who declare that

This is turning the tables on his adversarial

with a vengeance, and gives him an immense advantage over those who peddle out cheap moralities about "woman as God made her," "woman's sphere," and all that. Dr. Bushnell's sentimentalism on the "Reform against Nature," and the Reverend Fulton's "Serpent in the Garden of Eden" theory, tumble to pieces at once under Mr. Mill's way of handling. He rejects as pure assumptions,

In the second place the adoption of the system of inequality never was the result of deliberation, or forethought, or any social ideas, or any notion whatever of what could be produced to the benefit of humanity or the good order of society. It arose simply from the fact that from the earliest twilight of human

society, every woman (owing to the value at-
 tached to her by men, combined with her in-
 feriority in muscular strength) was found to
 owe obedience to some man. Laws and systems of
 morality always begin by recognizing the rela-
 tions which they find existing between individ-
 uals. They convert what was a mere physical fact
 into a legal right, sanction and protect it. In
 earlier times the majority of the male sex were
 slaves, as well as the whole of the female
 sex. And many ages elapsed before any thinker
 was bold enough to question the rightfulness

the absolute social necessity, either of the on-
 slavery or the other. The present dependence
 of woman is not an original institution; it
 having a fresh start from considerations of jus-
 tice and social expediency—it is the primitive
 state of slavery lasting on, through succes-
 sive mitigations and modifications occasion-
 ed by the same causes which have softened
 the general manners, and brought all human
 relations more under the control of justice
 and the influence of humanity. But it has

Mr. Mill declares that this subordination of women is an isolated fact in modern social institutions; a solitary branch of what has become their fundamental law, namely: that all human beings have an equal right to employ their faculties, and such favorable chances as may offer, to achieve the lot which may ap-

near to them most desirable. And disabilities to which women are subject from the mere fact of their birth, are the solitary examples of this kind in modern legislation. In no instance except this are the higher social functions closed against any one by the fatality of birth which no exertions and no change of circumstances can overcome. This anomalous fact of the present is a relic of the

Mr. Mill's book is full of quotable passages. Indeed, it is difficult to resist the desire to quote it all, for there is not a page of it but which leads to the point. For the present, however, we must content ourselves with one more extract. Referring to that class of male wiseacre who are so ready with their nice, stupid homilies on the sphere and nature of woman, he

There's little chance of reasonable thinking on the matter while people flatter themselves that they perfectly understand a subject of which most men know absolutely nothing, air of which it is at present impossible that any man, or all men taken together, should have knowledge that can qualify them to lay down the law to women as to what is or what is not their vocation. Half as much such knowledge is necessary:

One thing we may be certain of—that what is contrary to woman's nature to do they never will be made to do by simply giving them nature free play. The anxiety of mankind to interfere in behalf of nature, lest nature should not succeed in effecting its purposes is altogether unnecessary solitude. What man by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing. What the

can do, but not so well as the men who their competitors, competition suffices to exclude them from; since nobody asks for protective duties and bounties in favor of men; it is only asked that the present bounties and protective duties in favor of men should be recalled. If women have a great natural fitness for some things than for others, there is no need of laws or social institution to make the majority of them do the men in preference to the latter. Whatever the services are most wanted for, the free play

* * * The general opinion is
posed to be, that the natural vocation of
woman is that of a wife and mother. It
is supposed to be, because, judging from
—from the whole present constitution of
city—one might infer that their opinion
the direct contrary. They might be sup-
posed to think that the alleged natural voca-
tion of woman was of all things repugnant.

to do anything else—if any other means of living or occupation is open which has a chance of appearing desirable to them—they will not be enough of them willing to accept the condition said to be natural to them. This is the real opinion of men in general; and would be well that it should be spoken out should like to hear somebody openly enunciating the doctrine (it is already implied much that is written on the subject)—“necessary to society that women should be”

unless they are compelled. Therefore it is necessary to compel them." The method of the case would then be clearly defined. The men who attempt to force women into marriage by closing all other doors against them, themselves open to be thus understood. They mean what they say, their opinion is plainly that men do not render the married condition so desirable to women as to induce them to accept it for its own reward.

[illegible]

